

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SY-05 DHA-02 IO-13 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /079 W

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R 151250Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6336

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 4617

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, SCUL, AR

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC CHURCH ISSUES RESTRAINED STATEMENT ON POLITICAL
VIOLENCE

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 4487, (B) BUENOS AIRES 3866

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS' EPISCOPAL
CONFERENCE, WHICH INCLUDES CARDINALS ARAMBURU AND PRIMATESTA,
RELEASED ON JULY 13 A SHORT STATEMENT DEPLORING CURRENT
POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ARGENTINA. MESSAGE WAS ADDRESSED TO
PRESIDENT VIDELA AND OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS, AND EXPRESSED
CONCERN OF COMMITTEE OVER "...VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF
VIOLENCE..." WHICH "ENDANGER PEACE AND BRING SUFFERING TO
THE ARGENTINE COMMUNITY." MESSAGE WAS INSPIRED BY "...RECENT
EVENTS WHICH HAVE DEEPLY WOUNDED THE HEART OF THE CHURCH AND
THE PEOPLE..."

2. CARDINAL ARAMBURU AND PAPAL NUNCIO CALLED ON MIN INTERIOR
HARGUINDEGUY JULY 13 TO ADVISE HIM OF MESSAGE AND REPORTEDLY
ALSO TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN STATUS OF PRIESTS BEING HELD BY
GOA UNDER STATE OF SIEGE PROVISIONS.

3. COMMENT. DURING CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR JULY 8
(REFTEL A) PAPAL NUNCIO SAID THAT CHURCH WOULD ISSUE
GENERAL STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE, WITHOUT SPECIFIC REFERENCE

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TO KILLING OF FIVE PRIESTS AND SEMINARIANS ON JULY 4.

CONSIDERING THAT CHURCH KNOWS THAT ITS CLERGY WERE KILLED
BY POLICE, AND CARDINAL ARAMBURU THREW ACCUSATION IN FACE
OF HARGUINDEGUY, TONE OF MESSAGE TO VIDELA AND JUNTA IS
REMARKABLY RESTRAINED. WE SUSPECT MEETING OF ARAMBURU AND
NUNCIO WITH HARGUINDEGUY YESTERDAY MAY HAVE BEEN
STORMY AFFAIR, BUT
DOE NOT YET HAVE REPORT ON MEETING.
WHILE CHURCH APPARENTLY WILLING TO SPEAK HARSHLY IN PRIVATE
TO GOA, IT STILL CLINGS PUBLICLY TO REFRAIN, NEUTRAL
POSTURE DISCUSSED IN REFTEL B. IF THERE ARE MORE DIRECT
ATTACKS ON CHURCH ITSELF, SUCH AS MURDER OF PRIESTS, IT
MAY BE FORCED INTO MUCH MORE OPEN CRITICISM OF GOA, KKDER
PRESSURE OF LIBERAL ELEMENTS WITHIN CLERGY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHURCH STATE RELATIONS, TERRORISTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BUENOS04617
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760273-0385
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760757/aaaabxkn.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BUENOS AIRES 4487, 76 BUENOS AIRES 3866
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CATHOLIC CHURCH ISSUES RESTRAINED STATEMENT ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, SCUL, PINS, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006